# THIEF OF THIEVES

Issue 14

by

Andy Diggle

Second Draft

21 February 2013

PAGE 1

FULL PAGE SPLASH. As This issue kicks off a new arc/trade, let's re-establish the scene from the end of the previous issue.

CONRAD and AUGUSTUS sit with their backs to us, tied or duct-taped to chairs in the Cartel warehouse. Cartel boss LOLA paces in front of them, toying with the grisly eye-lid key-ring in his hand.

Lola is a man so powerful, so dangerous, that he does not have to shout or threaten to instil fear. There's something implicitly threatening in his quiet understatement. The men he just killed sit slumped in their chairs, blood pooling around them...

HEADER
*OLD THIEVES NEVER DIE*
*They Just Get Taken*

LOLA
Reputation is so important in our line of work. But one's reputation must be earned.
(link)
You understand this. Your reputation is the very best.

PAGE 2

1) Lola gestures with the strap to Augustus, while still speaking to Conrad.

LOLA
But this boy, he does not earn his reputation. Instead he trades on yours.
(link)
He makes promises he cannot keep. He offers services which he does not deliver.

2) Lola paces.

LOLA
And now because of him, I am out of pocket. I lose my drugs, my money. I have men in federal penitentiary who now must be killed before they can talk.
(link)
And I must take time away from my family to fly up here and deal with these things.

3) Close angle on the eye-lid strap in Lola's hand. He pauses, looking down at it, lost in thought...

LOLA
It is hassle, you know?
(link)
I hate hassle.

4) On Conrad, deadly serious. Hard eye contact.

CONRAD
Tell me what you need.

PAGE 3

1) Three-shot, Lola looking down at Conrad and Augustus. Conrad turns to his son, frowning.

LOLA
Your son was hired to intercept a shipment from our Italian competitors.

CONRAD
Italian...?

AUGUSTUS
I can still get you the heroin!

2) Big panel, with enough room for back-and-forth dialogue. Conrad bows his head, gut-sick. Augustus looks angry and horrified --

CONRAD
No. The heroin is gone.
(link)
I threw it in the sea.

AUGUSTUS
You did what? Are you out of your fucking mind?
(link)
Why would you do that?!

3) Same angle. Conrad hangs his head. Aug yells at him.

CONRAD
It seemed like... the right thing to do.

AUGUSTUS
Sure! If you want to get us both gutted!

4) Lola leans in close to Aug, silencing him by his mere proximity.

LOLA
I cannot help wondering if your father has your best interests at heart.
(link)
But that is not really my concern.
(link)
What concerns me is whether he now has my best interests at heart.

PAGE 4

1) Conrad, matter-of-fact. He knows he's playing for his life here.

CONRAD
Listen to me. I understand. Okay? We can fix this. I can pay you back, plus interest. For your trouble.
(link)
I have a major score lined up, something I've been planning for three years now. It's all ready to go.
(link)
But I need Augustus.

2) Lola looks down on us, unimpressed.

LOLA
You need him.

3) Close on Conrad. Hard eye contact.

CONRAD
A world class score needs a world class crew. And my son is world class.
(link)
I should know. I trained him.

4) Lola smiles. Like a snake.

LOLA
You say this because you care about your son.
(link)
This is good. This is all I need to know.
(link)
He will stay with us.

5) Aug's face falls.

AUGUSTUS
What?

<u>PAGE 5</u>

1) Lola leans in very close to Conrad.

LOLA
I want <u>ten million dollars</u>. Do you understand?
(link)
And if you do not bring me this money within one month, then your idiot son, and your ex-wife, and everyone you ever cared about, they will die very badly.
(link)
Do you believe me?

2) Reverse angle. On Conrad.

CONRAD
I believe you.

3) Widen. Lola steps back, making a small gesture to his men, who step forward to release Conrad and Augustus.

LOLA
Then let us begin.

4) One of the cartel goons PUNCHES Aug hard across the jaw, toppling him over sideways --

FX
*WHOKK*

<u>PAGE 6</u>

1) Later. Close on Augustus, half conscious, his head lolling. Bloody, battered and bruised. He has been SEVERELY beaten. Black eye. Blood drools from a broken lip.

AUGUSTUS
(ragged)
Please... Don't--
(link)
Don't have to... do this...

2) Widen to reveal Aug is being carried/dragged by two Cartel thugs, holding him under the arms. He's NAKED. Aug doesn't have the strength to stand. His feet drag behind him.

AUGUSTUS
(ragged)
Just listen... Listen to me...
(link)
Can make a deal... Whatever he's paying you--

3) One of the Cartel thugs PUNCHES Aug in the gut, hard, folding him over.

AUGUSTUS
<u>*UHFF*</u>

4) Low angle. The second thug now single-handedly DRAGS Aug by one arm, dragging him along on his belly towards a yawning open SHIPPING CONTAINER. Blackness within. The other thug stands idly by, lighting a smoke, ignoring them.

5) Aug is THROWN into the back of the shadowy container. He hits the steel wall like a sack of potatoes.

FX
*WHUD*

PAGE 7

1) Close. The thug padlocks a chain around Aug's bloody ankle.

FX

*SNK*

2) Close. The other end of the chain is padlocked to a ring or strut welded to the corrugated steel wall.

FX

*SNK*

3) Low angle. The thug's feet stroll towards us, leaving Aug slumped against the back wall, chained like a dog. Broken, desperate. He reaches out weakly with a trembling hand...

AUGUSTUS

(ragged)

Wait... Please...

4) Pull back. The two thugs begin to close the container doors. Aug disappears from view as blackness swallows the interior.

AUGUSTUS

(ragged)

*Don't--*

5) Same angle. The doors SLAM shut.

FX

*WHUNNGG*

CAPTION

*"So that's it? You're just giving up?"*

1) FLASHBACK. Big pic. This is a few years ago, shortly before the ill-fated Cincinnati job. Conrad stands on the sidewalk, talking with Augustus who loads cardboard boxes, containing all of his worldly possessions, into the trunk of his crappy old car. It's parked outside a University hall of residence - a pleasant, leafy place. A low wall next to the sidewalk, then grass and trees, with the hall in the background. Students stroll and sit under trees, chatting and reading. A wholesome, positive place... which Aug is turning his back on. Aug loads boxes as the scene progresses.

HEADER
*SCHOOL'S OUT*
*Or, The Freshman Swaps Majors*

AUGUSTUS
Giving up? All I'm giving up is this phoney bullshit I never bought anyway.
(link)
I'm doing what I always should have been doing.

CONRAD
By what - quitting college after two semesters? Aug, your grades are great.

2) Aug sneers.

AUGUSTUS
My grades are fake! I broke into the college servers and changed them!

3) Aug, panel left, faces Conrad, panel right. Conrad tries not to look disappointed. Fails.

AUGUSTUS
And there it is again, that look on your face - disappointment.
(link)
Y'know what, Dad, I can't remember the last time you looked at me any other way.

CONRAD
That's not true. I've always believed in you.

1) Aug slams a box down into the trunk.

AUGUSTUS
That's not what you said when I asked you to train me.
(link)
All you've ever done is put me down. And you know what? I finally figured out why --

2) Aug turns to us, bitter.

AUGUSTUS
You can't stand the idea of not being top dog any more!
(link)
Redmond, the master thief, his title stolen by the young upstart!

3) Conrad's face goes hard. This is not something to be discussed in public.

CONRAD
Augustus. Keep your voice down.

4) Augustus gestures to the university hall and the students on the grass --

AUGUSTUS
So you channeled me into this-- this puppy-dog civilian bullshit.
(link)
And you know what? I hate it. I'm lousy at it. This is not who I am!

5) Close on Augustus, hard eye contact.

AUGUSTUS
I was raised by wolves. I'm a wolf.
(link)
You get it? I'm a fucking wolf.

1) Conrad meets his gaze levelly. You can almost hear his molars grinding.

CONRAD
Is that right.

2) Augustus slams the trunk shut.

AUGUSTUS
Yes it is. So spare me the pep talk, okay? School is out. Playtime is over. Thank you and good night.

FX
*WHUNK*

3) Augustus opens the driver's side door, as he stands looking down at Conrad. Aug has the strength in this relationship now. The weak king sits deposed.

CONRAD
Son, listen to me. Please. You have to understand that everything I ever did, I did for you and your mother.
(link)
I just don't want you to make the same mistakes I did--

AUGUSTUS
Exactly. It's all about you. It's always about you, isn't it?

4) Augustus gets into the driver's seat, turning to face us.

AUGUSTUS
Well, the hell with you. I'm not your problem any more. I heard about a score in Cincinnati and I'm going for it.
(link)
This is my chance to make a name for myself in this business.

5) Close on Conrad. His eyes narrow, flinty.

AUGUSTUS
(off-panel)
I'm getting out from under your shadow.

PAGE 11

1) Back to the present. Conrad is roughly KICKED out of a black SUV. He sprawls onto the asphalt of a parking lot, in front of an all-night grocery store on the edge of town. It's NIGHT.

DRIVER
This is your stop.

2) View from the SUV. Conrad stands, dusting himself off.

DRIVER
Got a job to do. What you waitin' for, *cabrón*?

CONRAD
My wallet.

3) The Cartel driver grins, making a show of pulling out CASH and a Gold American Express card from a nice leather wallet.

DRIVER
Green an' gold. My favorite colors, man.

4) Conrad eye-fucks us, unmoving, as the empty wallet is thrown at him, bouncing off his chest.

DRIVER
(off-panel)
Call it a downpayment.

5) The driver grins nastily at us from the driver's window.

DRIVER
Don' worry, we'll take real good care of that *imbécil* boy of yours. Keep movin' him aroun' so you don't know where he'll be.
(link)
Fuck this up an' we mail you his head.

PAGE 12

1) Low angle. Close in foreground left, Conrad's hand reaches down to pick up the empty wallet. The car drives off on panel right.

2) Conrad looks over to the all-night store as he tucks his wallet into his jacket pocket. He looks defeated.

3) He walks into the store. Garish fluorescent light. The bored clerk ignores him, lost in the sports section.

4) Inset. Conrad lifts a bottle of Jack Daniels from the shelf.

5) Without breaking stride, Conrad strolls out through a stock-room doorway at the back marked STAFF ONLY; pushing through vertical strips of semi-transparent plastic.

PAGE 13

1) Conrad stands out back of the store by the dumpsters. He raises the bottle, about to take a swig...

2) FLASHBACK: Issue 3, page 1, panel 2: Younger Conrad walks in the twilight with 9-year old Augustus, chasing fireflies.

3) Repeat panel 1 from above: Conrad hasn't moved. Hasn't taken a swig, the bottle still poised in mid-air. Frozen by memory.

4) FLASHBACK: Issue 3, page 1, panel 4: Conrad watches little Augie run off down the forest path. Magic hour.

PAGE 14

1) Conrad closes his eyes. A look of deep regret mixed with new-found resolve and defiance.

2) He DROPS the bottle and it smashes on the ground. He never took a swig.

3) Big. Low angle. Broken Jack Daniels bottle in the foreground, panel left. Panel right, Conrad strides away purposefully into the night.

1) Wide interior establishing shot; the Reception area of a suburban office rental complex. It's now DAY. AUDREY speaks to the perky RECEPTIONIST. Audrey is dressed in a smart skirt-suit, heels, leather clutch bag, crisp and professional.

HEADER
*ONCE A THIEF...*
*Or, Audrey Takes An Interview*

AUDREY
Hi, my name's Audrey Paulson. I'm here for a job interview?

RECEPTIONIST
Of course. You can go right on up.
(link)
Third floor, first door on your right.

AUDREY
Thanks.

2) Inset. Audrey's knuckles rap on an office door.

FX
*NOK NOK*

CONRAD
(from within)
Come on in.

3) On Audrey as she opens the door and steps in. A look of sudden dismay on her face --

AUDREY
Oh, you have <u>got</u> to be kidding me...

4) Big! Audrey's POV, revealing CONRAD sitting behind the desk. Big windows behind him. He holds out his hands in a mock-innocent, mock-apologetic shrug. We don't have to establish it all in this panel, but it's a biggish office with floor height windows. A sofa against the wall.

CONRAD
You wouldn't take my calls. I had to get creative.

PAGE 16

Shawn, there's a lot of back-and-forth dialogue here, so feel free to break up the panels if you think it'll work better that way!

1) Audrey yells at Conrad as he rises from his swivel chair, trying to get a word in edgeways --

AUDREY
So you faked up a job interview?
Damn it, Conrad, this is my life!

CONRAD
Audrey--

AUDREY
Are you physically incapable of respecting other people's boundaries?
(link)
Do you seriously imagine you can trick your way back into my life and I'll just, what, fall into bed with you?

2) Conrad smiles, trying to make light of it, but it just doesn't work.

CONRAD
Maybe I really do want to offer you a job.

AUDREY
Have you been drinking?

CONRAD
No. But I've been giving it some serious thought.

3) Audrey has turned her back on him, heading for the door. Conrad steps forward.

AUDREY
I don't have time for this. I've moved on. Deal with it.

CONRAD
Audrey, wait. Please.
(link)
We need to talk...

4) On Audrey. His words stop her dead in her tracks.

CONRAD
(off-panel)
... About Augustus.

1) On Conrad, grim. He isn't the charming, confident alpha male any more. We can see the weight of worry grinding down on him.

CONRAD
This time... It's bad, Audrey.
(link)
They're going to kill him.

2) Audrey turns to us, worry etched into her face.

AUDREY
What have you gotten him into now?

3) Audrey sits on the sofa, head bowed. Conrad stands over her. A sadness hangs over them both.

AUDREY
... I'm sorry. That wasn't fair.
(link)
Neither of us were exactly parental role models, were we?

CONRAD
You got out of that life. I can too.

AUDREY
Sure you can.

CONRAD
Audrey, I'm telling you, I'm done...

4) On Conrad.

CONRAD
... After Venice.

PAGE 18

1) She looks up at him sadly.

AUDREY
Things can never go back to the way they were. You do understand that, right?

2) On Conrad. A grim smile.

CONRAD
Listen, I'm just trying to get through right now.

3) Conrad looks worried, almost apologetic. The significance of his words may not be clear, but we should get the sense that he's making a painful admission here...

CONRAD
The Venice job could cover his debt. If we can pull it off. It was always risky, but now, well...
(link)
The Italians are onto Sabatini.

4) Audrey looks alarmed. She understands the terrible significance of Conrad's words, even if we don't.

AUDREY
But Sabatini was--
(link; small text)
Oh, Jesus.

1) On Conrad. The weight bearing down on him. Confessional.

CONRAD
This is my last chance, Audrey.
(link)
All my life I've ducked my responsibilities, danced between the raindrops, and patted myself on the back for pulling it off...
(link)
And now it's all caught up with me.

2) Audrey stands and meets Conrad's eyes with a strong, level gaze. They face each other now as equals.

AUDREY
You know why? It's because you use people. You always have.
(link)
To you they're just a means to an end, tools of the trade...
(link)
And when you're finished with them, you just throw them away.

3) On Audrey. A hard look. Tough and determined.

AUDREY
I will not let that happen to our son.

4) Audrey turns and opens the door. Conrad stands there.

CONRAD
That's what I figured.
(link)
So about that job...?

PAGE 20

FULL PAGE SPLASH. Audrey turns and nails us with a hard look.

AUDREY
I'm in.

FOOTER
*TO BE CONTINUED!*